

own political aspirations. They were happy at the disappearance of Nicholas II because he was about to conclude a separate peace with the enemy. Now that this danger was over, they wanted a Russian *army*. As to the democratic ideals of the Russian people, they cared very little.

It is not surprising that the Entente, and Great Britain in particular, should have taken that attitude towards the young democracy. With no knowledge of the real psychology of revolutionary Russia as it shaped itself during the long and weary years of conflict for liberty, and not well informed even about the facts of that conflict, the Allies looked upon the Russian revolutionists as—well, visionaries. Here were some muddle-headed people who actually desired to pin down a statesman to his public declarations and who refused to stand by the written agreements of their own Government when such documents were not in accord with what they had believed them to be or what they thought was right. In order to simplify the problem, the Allies persuaded themselves that these Utopians could not be numerous in Russia. The Allies thought of Russia as it was fifty years and more

ago under Alexander II, the liberal Czar, before the real beginning of the revolutionary movement, when a constitutional monarchy might have satisfied the aspirations of the Russian people. To reason thus was to ignore the vast spiritual distances which the Russians have travelled since the time of Alexander II, all the way from a belief in benevolent monarchs to a belief—unreserved, complete, fanatical, perhaps—in the masses.

These, then, are the people whom Lloyd George counsels us to leave to their own fate. He finds no inconsistency between his cry for democracy and his attitude towards this infant democracy. The Allies do not yet appear awed by the fact that it is their criminal stupidity that has handed over Russia to the Germans and German ruthlessness. Will the Germans crush New Russia? Will the Allies succeed in winning the Russians to their own conception of democracy? Judging by the past, neither is possible. What is likely is that Russia will continue to suffer and stand by her ideal—faith in the infinite goodness and safety of the common people—until her gospel shall have become universal.

The New Democracy

By RICHARD ROBERTS

THE tragedy of revolution—contrary to the view of the orthodox historical textbooks—is that it has never gone quite far enough. The records of revolution are filled chiefly with its negative and destructive performances simply because its impulse, not having been sustained by an adequate social vision, has run out before it could swing on to the business of constructive achievement. Yet the possibilities of the vision were present all the time. The mainspring of revolution is the sense of disinheritorship, rendered intolerable by injustice and exploitation; but the sense of disinheritorship properly understood is the negative side of a demand, organic to human nature, for the broadening of the social basis. The great historical rebels have invariably been men of wider social vision than their more respectable contemporaries; and the thing that became articulate in them was the craving of a class for its appointed share in the common human inheritance of larger light and fuller life. Yet because this social demand was not understood in all its implications and was not made explicit in a policy, it was assumed that the one thing needful was to break down the disabling barrier of privilege. That done, the rest would follow: the Golden Age would at once materialize. But it never did so. It was not perceived that the logic of revolution required and pointed to a sequel of positive and creative social action.

This was essentially Lamennais's plea in 1831. A successful revolution, he told his fellow-countrymen, is only the beginning of things. You have cleared the ground; now upon this cleared ground you have to raise the fabric of a living society. France itself did indeed provide the signal instance of the danger of an incomplete revolution. The political equality which was intended to give a fair field to every man, just because it stopped at that point, in effect opened the door to the strong man. The strong man came presently in the person of Napoleon; and with Napoleon the Empire and all that that episode cost France and Europe in blood and treasure. The same kind of miscarriage has befallen the wider historical development of the French

Revolution. The abolition of political privilege and the institution of democratic equality has during the nineteenth century made possible the growth of a new type of privilege and a new manner of disinheritorship. That Jack's note is as good as his master's has not always saved Jack from an exploitation as real and as burdensome as the feudalism under which his fathers groaned. It is characteristic of Lamennais's insight that he perceived that political equality without safeguards against economic exploitation would prove a vain thing. Writing to the workmen of Paris in 1847, he said that, with them, he "should demand that in accordance with justice and reason . . . the question should be seriously gone into, how it is possible, in the distribution of the fruits of labor, to do away with the revolting anomalies which crush under their weight the most numerous portion of the human family." Emile Faguet justly observes that Lamennais saw that the coming enemy was "le pouvoir d'argent," and that he endeavored to choke it before it could realize itself. Unhappily his reach exceeded his grasp.

Professor Hobhouse pertinently points out that democracy is "at best an instrument with which men who hold by the ideal of social justice and human progress can work. But when these ideals grow cold, it may, like other instruments, be turned to base uses." And Lord Morley in a similar strain asks us what we mean by democracy, whether "a doctrine or a force, constitutional parchment or a glorious evangel, perfected machinery for the wire-puller, the party tactician, the spoilsman, or the boss, or the stern and high ideals of a Mazzini or a Tolstoy." In point of fact, it may be reasonably held that worse has befallen it than the perversion that Lord Morley suggests. There is so much tendency at the moment to think of democracy as an end that it cannot be ill for us to be reminded how frequently in practice it has become the tool of gangs of strong men seeking selfish ends, and how Lincoln's famous formula has been buried beneath the practice of government by a well-to-do oligarchy in the interests of the privileged classes.

The method in the madness of the Bolsheviki is that they are minded to prevent the substitution of a plutocracy for an aristocracy and have therefore followed up the destruction of political privilege by the summary abolition of economic advantage. For they know that historically it is the fact, whether it is always bound to be so or not (as the English advocates of "national guilds" insist), that political power goes with economic power.

Mr. Albert Jay Nock has done well to remind us (in the *Evening Post* of January 30, 1918) that there are important differences between the Anglo-American and the European conceptions of democracy, though the main difference is not quite so clear-cut as he suggests. French and American democratic ideas have undoubtedly been more egalitarian than those of Great Britain. The Briton has cared less for political equality than for what he calls freedom, the right of self-determination, the opportunity to live out his life in his own way. He has been less doctrinaire than his French neighbor and has not been troubled by the logical anomaly of an aristocracy so long as the aristocracy left him reasonable elbow-room. The time came when the aristocracy was found to be obstructive and its pretensions had to be suitably abridged. This was done by the abolition of the veto of the House of Lords, and it is an interesting question whether that episode did not fitly close the long and not inglorious innings of British liberalism, and whether the further development of the Liberal tradition does not now pass into the hands of the new Labor party. What at least seems clear is that the British democracy is less concerned to-day with the aristocrat than it is with the profiteer—though the actual transition of interest is not so great as it looks on paper, for the simple reason that the wall of partition between the aristocracy and the plutocracy has long been in process of dilapidation and disappearance. In any case, it seems likely that the democratic movement in England will possess an economic outlook no less definite than that which Mr. Nock rightly ascribes to its Continental counterparts, and it is probable that it has already outstripped them in the clarity and definition of its aims.

The recent Report on Reconstruction prepared by a sub-committee of the British Labor Party is the most comprehensive scheme of economic change yet formulated by a responsible political party; and its significance is accentuated by the international solidarity of labor indicated by the Inter-Allied Labor Conference just closed in London and by the high probability that before many years, perhaps before many months, are passed, the party will be in a position to translate its policies into constitutional fact. It sets out its programme under four heads: (1) The Universal Enforcement of a National Minimum; (2) The Democratic Control of Industry; (3) Revolution in National Finance; (4) The Surplus Wealth for the Common Good. It is beyond our present purpose to examine this scheme in detail, but its sweep may be measured by its demand for the immediate nationalization of land, railways, mines, the production of electrical power, and insurance. While for the moment at least it does not propose the nationalization of all industries, it safeguards the worker against the possibility of exploitation by private capital, by vesting the purchase and distribution of raw material in the state, which is therefore able to impose its own terms upon the manufacturer. This measure, joined with the proposal to impose stiff limitations on profit and with the demand that the worker shall share with the employer the control of the

industry, seems to point to the ultimate organization of national industry on the basis of "national guilds," a plan which has been ably advocated in England for some years by a group of conspicuously able thinkers as the *via media* between the wasteful individualism of the past and the dangerous centralization implied in Marxian socialism.

Of even greater significance than the practical details of the programme is its spirit. In the statement concerning the future disposition of the surplus wealth which has hitherto gone into the pockets of those already rich, the report says:

It is from the same source that has to be defrayed the public provision for the sick and infirm of all kinds (including that for maternity and infancy) which is still so scandalously insufficient; for the aged and those prematurely incapacitated by accident or disease, now in many ways so imperfectly cared for; for the education alike of children, of adolescents, and of adults, in which the Labor party demands a genuine equality of opportunity, overcoming all differences of material circumstances; and for the organization of public improvements of all kinds, including the brightening of the lives of those now condemned to almost ceaseless toil, and a great development of the means of recreation. From the same source must come the greatly increased public provision that the Labor party will insist on being made for scientific investigation and original research, in every branch of knowledge, not to say also for the promotion of music, literature, and fine art, which have been under capitalism so greatly neglected, and upon which, so the Labor party holds, any real development of civilization fundamentally depends. Society, like the individual, does not live by bread alone—does not exist only for perpetual wealth production. It is in the proposal for this appropriation of every surplus for the common good—in the vision of its resolute use for the building up of the community as a whole instead of for the magnification of individual fortunes—that the Labor party, as the party of the producers by hand or by brain, most distinctively marks itself off from the older political parties, standing, as these do, essentially for the maintenance, unimpaired, of the perpetual private mortgage upon the annual product of the nation that is involved in the individual ownership of land and capital.

This suggests that we are face to face with a new type of political philosophy, a type which rests upon a definite view of the ends of life and a vision of life as a whole. Hitherto the political philosopher has apparently gone on the assumption that his problem was fully stated in terms of an abstract individual over against an abstract state, just as the economist has also in times past proceeded on the view that a man could be treated as an economic unit and his labor as a measurable marketable commodity separate from his personality. Both sciences alike largely subordinated man to the system, either to the political organization or to the machinery for the production of wealth. But to-day we are witnessing the emergence of a full-blooded humanism into political theory and practice. Beneath this report, which (whether its plans are all finally endorsed by the party or not) is in its spirit and hope an embodiment of the idealism of the British labor movement, there lies a clear sense that every man has and is an end in himself, and that he can achieve that end only in a social setting which he must share in creating. Its view is that man and the community achieve their distinctive ends in each other. The great soul and the great society will arrive together. The historical significance of this document appears to be that it presages a new stage in the development of the democratic ideal. Perhaps it is the beginning of the long-delayed economic sequel of the achievement of the French Revolution, in which case it may very well turn out to be the Magna Charta of the new democracy.